Under the Scheme of Grant-in-aid, funds are released to Voluntary Organisations, on the recommendation of the concerned State Government, for taking up action oriented projects for the benefit of working children. Over 70 projects are currently under implementation under the Scheme of grant-in-aid.

The above Schemes are continuing in the year 2000-2001 also.

Government is committed to the goal of eradication of child labour in all its forms. Considering the nature and magnitude of the problem a gradual, progressive and sequential approach has been adopted to withdraw and rehabilitate child labour.

Vacant posts of SC/ST categories in Ministry of Labour

3607. SHRI BASANTI SARMA: Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) the number of various posts reserved for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes lying vacant in his Ministry for the last five years and till date;

(b) the action being taken to fill them up; and

(c) the time by which the said posts are likely to be filled up?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI MUNI LALL): (a) to (c) The information is being collected and will be laid on the table of the House.

National Wage Policy for Bidi Labourers

3608. MISS. MABEL REBELLO: Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government will make a National Policy for Bidi Labourers so that they may get equal wages all over the country;

(b) whether Government will take necessary steps to ensure that the Bidi magnates do not shift their Bidi manufacturing units to States having lower wages for Bidi making thereby rendering lakhs of bidi labourers without employment and on the verge of starvation in Madhya Pradesh; and

(c) How much allocation was made available in 1999-2000 to construct residential accommodation for Bidi labourers in Mahdya Pradesh?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI MUNI LALL): (a) and (b) The Government has examined the issue of a National Wage Policy which has been discussed on many occasions in different fora. Since fixation of wages depends on a number of factors like local conditions, cost of living and paying capacity, which varies from State to State and from Industry to Industry, it has not been found feasible to maintain uniformity in wages all over the country. The Indian Labour Conference, held in November 1985 expressed that 'Till such time a national wage is feasible, it would be desirable to have regional minimum wages in regard to which the Central Government may lay down the guidelines. The minimum wages should be revised at regular periodicity and should be linked with rise in the cost of living." Accordingly, the Government issued guidelines in July, 87 for setting up of Regional Minimum Wages Advisory Committees. These Committees renamed subsequently as Regional Labour Ministers' Conferences, made a number of recommendations which include reduction in disparities in minimum wages in different states of a region, setting up of Inter-State Coordination Council and consultation with neighbourig States while fixing/ revising minimum wages.

In the absence of a National Wage Policy, the Central Government introduced National Floor Level Minimum Wage of Rs. 35/- per day in 1996 based on the recommendations of the National Commission on Rural Labour in 1991 and subsequent increase in price level. The Floor Level Minimum Wage was further enhanced to Rs. 40/- per day in August, 1998 when Hon'ble Prime Minister wrote to all the State Governments/Union Territories requesting them to ensure that minimum wages are not paid below Rs. 40/- per day for any scheduled employment. It has been further increased to Rs. 45/- per day due to increase in the Consumer Price Index Number.

(c)Rs. 51.30 lakhs.

Schemes introduced for Child Labourers

†3609. SHRI GOPALSINH G. SOLANKI: Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) the number of times the schemes introduced for child labourers have been reviewed, so far;

(b) whether Government are aware of the fact that children are still engaged in various types of labour;

(c) if so, the number of cases filed, so far, by Government against various persons; and

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.